



## Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

<b>Family Support Work Group – February 22, 2005 – 9-11 a.m.</b>	
<b>Members Present:</b> Penny Farrar, Jacqueline Gorton, Kenneth Myers, Gwen Paul, Martha Reeder, Sorita Rusher, Kathleen Stafford, Paula C. Watson, and Lorie Williams. <b>Visitor:</b> Belynda Dix, from the Family Foundation Mapping Project with Patti Bokony (Social-Emotional Work Group).	
<b>Regrets:</b> Sherrill Archer, Florene Gaston, Deborah Gangluff, Dana Gonzales, Ginny Kur-rus, Teri Patrick, J.B. Robertson, Kathy Robinson, and Susan Underwood.	
<b>Agenda Item #1: Re-application Process and Strengthening Families</b>	
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Arkansas is in position to re-apply for the next cycle of funds. The “guidance” is not available yet. It may come at anytime and we need to be ready when it comes down from Washington. There will be a short turn-around time. Each group has been asked to look at their goals as part of the report to be submitted and answer three questions about each goal. It is a part of the planning process.</p> <p>This group has taken a proactive approach in a lot of different areas. The three questions which must be answered about each goal are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is already in place to accomplish the goal?</li> <li>2. What additional activities can be done to help accomplish the desired outcome?</li> <li>3. What system is in place to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities (did we do what we said we would do)?</li> </ol> <p>The Strengthening Families program targets child abuse by better educating child-care providers. Built into the</p>	<p>Another part of the plan is to work with the Division of Children and Family Services to better serve those children under their guidance and make sure they are cared for in quality settings.</p> <p>Arkansas is going to be able to address some of the goal already set in AECCS through Strengthening Families, include web design, tool kit, etc. First out of eight goals is a combination of the tool kit and web page on the top three. It is a direct result of the work of this group. When working in a planning effort, the “fruits” are not easily seen. But, this is going to happen. We hope to have the web design up in six months. This group has a really good chance of seeing some of their goals accomplished.</p> <p>If you can encourage some of the people who should be here today to attend future meetings, please do so. There are some really good things happening.</p> <p>There are two other things happening. The first one is a communications strategy for getting Strengthening</p>

**Agenda Item #1, Continued: Re-application Process and Strengthening Families**

**Discussion:** Representatives from SFI will be present as well as other dignitaries. There will be an expert panel discussion, questions and answer period, a call-in for resources opportunity, etc. You will learn more about this later. It will be a very inclusive open meeting. People from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) will be there and be on a panel. We are also looking at other venues to get the message out.

The other things happening is the March 10-11 retreat will be an orientation meeting to the SFI materials for the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee for SFI and AECCS is being combined. The Steering Committee will implement the SFI in Arkansas.

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It is not a free-standing type of program. It is a conceptual framework that can be imbedded into programs that are already working.

In Arkansas, we will pick 3-5 programs that are model programs and work with those programs to strengthen them in the five protective factors; trying also to strengthen the link with children and family services. We will be working on identifying the 3-5 model programs. We will be focusing on programs that are already existing. We will enhance what they are already doing. They will then be able to mentor and provide technical assistance to other programs across the state. We do not know the end result, but it may affect the way training is given to child care providers. The model programs will then be able to mentor and provide technical assistance to other programs across the state.

**Agenda Item #2: Parent Education Certification/Credentialing**

**Discussion:** Parent Education is looking at the possibility of offering a new credential program for frontline workers. In Arkansas, so far there is a gap in training. The Family Development Program being investigated is from Missouri. It is designed to reorient human service practice to the family support approach. It offers a research-based, comprehensive curriculum in family support principles, which significantly improves the ability of frontline workers to help the families and individuals they work with to set and reach their goals. After successful completion of 90 classroom hours of instruction, a standardized exam, and portfolio development under the guidance of a community-based field advisor, workers receive a credential issued by the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Family Studies Program. If we decide to cooperate with this program, there will be a credentialing agent in Arkansas.

The program has been reviewed by National PONS I. They evaluated and determined that the number of college credits is seven. Any state that cooperates with National PONS I will accept those hours. When the student finishes the program, the student can apply for this seven hours of credit from Cornell University in New York State. Because of this program, a lot of people who never thought about going to college have decided to go on for further training. They are looking at incorporating in the CDA training.

The central office receives \$300. The tuition cost is around \$1200. In Missouri, the Children's Trust Fund has covered the tuition for family service workers. Head Start has funded scholarships for their workers. Various areas around the state have experienced a great deal of success by looking for local foundation

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### Agenda Item #3: Reapplication Process, Continued

**Discussion:** The long-term objectives and goals were reviewed. Five goals were read. Suggested that the group look at way to reduce the goals down to three or four. It may be more helpful to take one goal and answer it as an example. Each of the three questions is on a separate page. The value of doing this in a group, is to get information from all sources. Everyone may have different information.

It was suggested that Goal #1 and Goal #3 be closely aligned. There is a long list of resources to help families. Some are not connected and not user-friendly.

Other Discussion. Act 603 sounded like a good thing. It is loosely constructed. It does not give any "how to's" and no money is directly attached to it directly. But, there is money allocated to the program given to the school with their other allocation. Can't use federal funds to carry out a state law. Schools are handling ACT 603 differently. Sometime legislators do not think things all the way through. There are some good program out there that are working. The tool kit that is being developed should be helpful.

Parents need to have immediate help. They want to get on a telephone and have immediate assistance. All parents find themselves in need of help from time to time. An 800 number may be needed to help people walk through the system.

In Arkansas there are three functioning 800 numbers. One in NW Arkansas. One at DHS downtown, and one in Batesville. Currently, we are not covering the southern part of the state, but there are representatives out

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there. We are trying to get one in that part of the state. We are trying to get grocers to put the numbers on the back of their receipts.

There does not seem to be very much corporate involvement in the state of Arkansas. Child care is not viewed as charitable.

We need a study on the impact of child care on the state of Arkansas. The group was asked to accept assignment of the remaining goals. Jackie chose #5.

If a change needs to be made in the system, the group could present ideas to the interagency group, indicating that you have studied the problem and recommend the proposed solution. The interagency group will have to make the decision to knock the barriers down. This will not happen overnight, but it does not mean we should give this up as a goal.

The group worked on combining goal #1 and goal #3. One talks about getting funding to the community level. Three is talking about community networks. Suggestion: Community networks are supported through financial incentives and local funding sources identified.

Goal #4. The difference between goal #4 and goal #5. We are talking about community buy-in. Corporations need to have a bigger investment in making their communities better places to live and work.

Next step. Martha will send out sheets for each of the remaining goals. If you want, you can work on a specific goal or all of the goals. Please take it seriously and get the information back to Martha by March 3.

**TASKS:** Martha will send out goal sheets for review by work group members by March 3

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**Agenda Item #4: Adjournment – Next Meeting Date**

**Discussion:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Result: Date:** April 12, 2005

**Time:** 9 – 11 a.m.

**Place:** Freeway Medical Center  
5800 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Room 902  
Little Rock, AR 72204